The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 33.3 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, I should like to propose to adjourn this meeting until 7 November. Also in accordance with the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I should like to explain why we are presenting this motion.

Let us not pretend that we do not understand what is happening here. It is absolutely clear to us why adopting a draft resolution ahead of time has been proposed — I think that it is clear fto the members of the Security Council, and probably for most people in the Chamber. In addition, I am sure that it is absolutely clear to the authors of this deplorable idea. This has not been done out of good intentions; it is intended to embarrass Russia once again.

I also want to be absolutely clear. Today's decision will in no way affect the future of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). The way it functions up to 17 November is the way it will continue to function, regardless of the decision we take today, and even if we take no decision to extend it. That does not mean, however, that the decision on extending the JIM cannot be adopted in principle. The authors of the draft resolution understand our position very well. We have expressed it more than once. First we receive the report, then we consider it, and then we discuss the extension. There is no need present the situation so as to make it appear that the future of the JIM and of the planet itself depends on today's decision. Let us not mislead anyone.

Over the past year, we have not seen a single substantive report from the JIM. Obviously, we would all like to see the report of the Mechanism on the episode in Khan Shaykhun, which is to be published on 26 October. That is only two days from now — the day after tomorrow. It is unprecedented and unjustified by any logic that the United States should insist on extending the operation of a body with a limited time frame before the publication of a report that we are all eagerly awaiting. Moreover, the argument that the JIM has a great deal of work ahead as a justification for this untimely decision simply does not stand up to criticism.

We suggest adjourning this meeting until 7 November, when, in accordance with the plans of the Italian presidency in November, we will discuss the Syrian chemical dossier. At that time, we will take a decision on extending the JIM in a calm atmosphere, without any of the unprecedented pressure to which we have been subject. I ask the members of the Council to support us, in accordance with rule 33.3 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, in postponing the meeting until 7 November.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): We will not agree to Russia's procedural proposal. The United States wants this vote on the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to take place today. The JIM needs to be renewed now, as soon as possible and in a non-politicized way to keep its important work on track, without interruption. There is no time to waste. It is not every day that the Council considers an issue that is so horrific and so shocking to the conscience as the use of chemical weapons against civilians. We need to keep this important work of the JIM on track.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): Russia's procedural proposal is a cynical attempt to link two things that do not need to be linked and that should not be linked — the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, on the one hand, and its report, which is due imminently, on the other. Attempting to link the two, as Russia is doing, is politicization. Going ahead with the meeting and with the vote as planned is the way that the supporters of the draft resolution (S/2017/884) have attempted to avoid politicization. I think that we should go to great lengths to make sure that there is no politicization in the mandate renewal of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, and the best way to avoid politicizing such an important issue is to go ahead with the vote on the mandate renewal today, as planned.

Secondly, on a point of practicality, we saw what happened a year ago when there was uncertainty about

the future of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. Its staff left, its capability dwindled and it was unable to operate for some months. The only beneficiaries of a significant similar delay this time around would be the users of chemical weapons in Syria — Da'esh, the Syrian regime and their backers.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia is taking the floor because of our concern that it is very possible that, today in the United Nations, the Security Council will send a completely negative signal to the world.

We agree with the proposal made by the Russian Federation because we believe that the Security Council must remain united and unanimous in its fight against the use of chemical weapons. We deplore the fact that proposals are presented in the full knowledge that they will be vetoed and opposed, and deliberately without providing the time necessary to reach the consensus and unity that Security Council has demonstrated on so many occasions.

For that reason, Bolivia expresses its support for the proposal of the Russian Federation to postpone the voting on the draft resolution before us.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now put the proposal of the Russian Federation to the vote, in accordance with rule 33 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation

Against:

France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

Abstaining:

Egypt, Ethiopia,Senegal

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 4 votes in favour, 8 votes against and 3 abstentions. The proposal has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/884, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): What is happening right now smells bad. Let me explain. A few days before the release of the report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), a draft resolution (S/2017/884) on extending it for a year is thrown together. In the run-up to that, a major information campaign is under way in the media. Ambassador Haley gives a number of interviews in which she unambiguously accuses Russia of wanting to torpedo the work of the JIM. She sends a letter to Security Council members on the urgent need to extend the Mechanism's mandate for a year.

At the same time, it justifies the lack of action by the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based on a conveniently timed note from the Fact-finding Mission supposedly explaining — but actually justifying that lack of action — why a fact-finding mission did not attempt to establish the facts and did not even visit the scene of the incident under discussion. We will come back to the Fact-finding Mission later. The note from the Permanent Representative of the United States suddenly, and clearly accidentally, falls into the hands of the *The New York Times*, which last Saturday, 21 October, publishes a long article on the subject, beginning with the words "A confrontation that is looming at the United Nations between the United States and Russia".

What do we call that? We call it preparing your artillery. Let me remind the Council that the JIM was established in August 2015 as a joint — I repeat, a joint — initiative of Russia and the United States.

It was established in order to conduct a thorough, professional and objective investigation and to identify the perpetrators of incidents involving the use of toxic chemical agents. The Mechanism was given a broad mandate and provided with everything needed for its implementation. On 26 October — that is, this Thursday — the JIM report on the 4 April incident in Khan Shaykhun is due to come out. Naturally, we have all been eagerly awaiting the release of the report and its conclusions.

Incidentally, contrary to what Ambassador Haley claimed in one of her interviews, Russia has not read the JIM report in advance and is not familiar with its conclusions. So why extend the Mechanism's mandate two days before the release of the report? We all want to familiarize ourselves with it, discuss its content and conclusions calmly, and then, just as calmly, return to the issue of the extension of the JIM, whose mandate expires on 17 November. Which means we have plenty of time to extend it. Is that illogical? Or confrontational? Then why put the cart before the horse?

There is something else I should explain. Let me remind the Council of the facts. On 4 April, there was an incident involving the use of chemical agents in Khan Shaykhun. The United States and its allies were quick to blame Damascus for it and on 7 April, violating every norm of international law, the United States launched a missile strike on the Shayrat airbase. From day one, before any conclusions and before the investigation itself, it had already decided on the perpetrators. Clearly, then, that illegal action can be justified only if the JIM investigation's findings confirm its version. And should the JIM dare to come out with a different version, that would raise the question of why it bombed Shayrat. And that would not be very convenient.

The United States is not interested in either the lack of evidence or the laughable techniques and methods of the investigation. It has decided on the guilty party, and decided it in advance. Let me point out that it has said that at every opportunity. In human terms, this is understandable. A bad performance, badly directed, has not done the job. There is no evidence for an air strike, and what there is is all too clearly a stitch-up. We have to shove it out of sight so that no one is any the wiser and extract ourselves from an awkward situation without losing face. How do we do that? Easy. After all, we can always blame Russia for everything.

So how do we arrange the cover-up? We can throw together a draft resolution extending the JIM mandate a few days before the report's release on 26 October, even though that is not remotely urgent. The JIM will be operational until 17 November and there is nothing forcing us to take the decision to extend it before then. So why do we do so now, and in such a hurry? Does nobody find that strange? Is it not the case that the American side knows the report's conclusions and understands that the evidence for their theory will not stand up to any criticism and that in turn could call into question extending a mechanism that is not equal to its task and serves only to justify unseemly political aims?

The United States — and, incidentally, not only the United States — has accused Russia of putting pressure on the JIM. To quote Ambassador Haley, in an interview on 18 October she said,

> "The Russians have made it very clear that should the report blame the Syrians suddenly, they won't have faith in the JIM. If the report doesn't blame the Syrians, then they say that they will".

We have never said that, and there is no record of any such quote from us. And if it is not a quote but the Americans continues to assert it anyway, that is defamation. What we have always said is that what we are expecting from the JIM is a fair, objective, professional, unbiased investigation. We have said that we are relying on the fact that the JIM will not go the route of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission and repeat its obvious mistakes, which I fear are deliberate. We have also said that if the report presents irrefutable proof of the guilt of any of the parties, we will agree with it.

But, yes, we really have said that we doubt that any such proof will be presented. And we have reason to doubt it, because the JIM's methods of work, which we have indeed criticized, give cause for concern. Because it is impossible to conduct a full-fledged, objective, professional investigation with such methods. But we have also said that we should not anticipate. Let us wait for the release of the JIM's report and then judge it on its professionalism and objectivity. Note that I do not say judge it based on whom it accuses, but on its professionalism and objectivity. But in the same interview I cited, Ambassador Haley said,

> "It would be a shame if Russia chose to decide whether to have an investigative mechanism based on who was to blame in Khan Shaykhun".

Let me repeat that we have never raised any such question.

I will cite one more quote from Ambassador Haley's interview — I like quoting her. "We can't go and pick and choose who we want to be at fault." There I fully agree with her. Only this is the problem — it is not us but the United States that has already decided who is to blame. From day one, the United States has asserted that the Syrian Government was at fault, and it punished Syria for that with a missile attack on the Shayrat airbase. It has asserted that the Syrian Air Force dropped a sarin bomb on the heads of its own citizens. I am not even talking here about the feeble evidence presented to us or the obvious signs that the video they showed us of the scene of the incident was staged. We discussed all of that during the briefing on the margins of the General Assembly on 13 October. If anyone is not yet familiar with it, we can circulate copies of the statement in English right now. But has anyone thought about the sense of Syrian aircraft using a sarin bomb? Is anyone here capable of understanding how pointless its use would be from a military point of view when there are other conventional and far more effective means of destruction at one's disposal? Has it never occurred to anyone that there is less reason to blame Damascus for using chemical weapons than anybody else?

By introducing this draft resolution now, the United States is destroying the Security Council's unity and artificially dividing it. We all understand how important that unity is. We understand it. Our colleagues in the Security Council understand it, as do the other Member States. But something else is important to the United States. It needs to show that Russia is to blame for not extending the JIM and proclaim to the whole world that it is Russia that has divided the Council.

(*spoke in English*)

The United States is begging for confrontation in the Security Council.

(*spoke in Russian*)

But right now we are trying to help the American delegation save face. They will not be able to show Russia in an unattractive light, which is what they are obviously trying to achieve.

We will not allow the adoption of the draft resolution now because, as we have said, and as they were well aware, when they proposed the text of this hastily drawn up draft resolution we said that the extension should follow the report and its discussion — in that order. However, nothing is preventing us from going back and extending the JIM mandate after the report has been published and we have taken our time to review and discuss it in the Security Council.

Moreover, when the issue of extending the JIM mandate is discussed in the Council, we will insist upon amending its mandate to ensure that it succinctly includes the elements of professionalism and impartiality that we want to see. Others should not try to give the impression that, unless they take our arguments into account and, contrary to the voice of reason, adopt the draft resolution today, the JIM will become a dead letter. They know that we will not allow the draft resolution to be adopted today. Could it be that this is an an intentional attempt to demonstrate to the world that Russia wants to close down the JIM at any cost? That is not true. We are ready to return to negotiations aimed at extending the JIM mandate following the publication of the report and its discussion after 26 October.

For the time being, I call on the United States delegation to postpone the adoption of the draft resolution until the report's publication. I should not like to feel obliged to repeat the words of the United States representative who proposed postponing a vote in 1946 "in order to avoid the painful necessity of casting a negative vote at this time" (*S/PV.55, p. 68*).

The President (*spoke in French*): The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay

Against:

Plurinational State of Bolivia, Russian Federation

Abstaining:

China, Kazakhstan

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 11 votes in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): As I just said prior to the voting, it is not everyday that the Security Council considers an issue as horrific and shocking to our collective conscience as the use of chemical weapons against civilians. Today is an important date on the calendar. It is United Nations Day, on which we the peoples of the United Nations commit to unite — as the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations states — to maintaining international peace and security. We all know that there has long been an international norm against the use of chemical weapons because their cruel and indiscriminate nature are such that their use is never justified. In one of its rare moments of unity, the Council appropriately condemned chemical weapons attacks in Syria. We even collaborated on establishing an independent, impartial body to investigate confirmed cases of chemical-weapon use. That body is comprised of internationally recognized independent experts. It employs professional, scientific means of investigating attacks and identifying those responsible, and yet that body is under attack by the Syrian regime's allies.

The question that we must ask ourselves is whether the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is being attacked because it has failed in its job to determine the truth in Syria, or because its conclusions have been politically inconvenient for some Council members. We just voted on a short, simple draft resolution to extend the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. We mandated that technical body to investigate chemical-weapon attacks on the innocent men women and children of Syria. Made up of experts from the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the JIM has the simple task of finding out who ordered and carried out the use of those weapons in Syria. The United States and 10 other members of the Council voted in favour of the draft resolution today, as it is clear to us that there is more work to be done and more chemical-weapon attacks to investigate.

The JIM has been successful in its work, and we want that vital work to continue without interruption in its operations. We want to know the truth about those attacks regardless of where it takes us. The United States deeply regrets that one member of the Council vetoed the text, thereby putting political considerations over the misery of Syrian civilians who have suffered and died from the use of chemical weapons. The reasons offered this morning fool no one. We reject the cynicism, and we reaffirm our confidence in the technical experts — men and women — who come from many regions, backgrounds and perspectives. They knew their work would be attacked by Syria's allies, yet they have carried out their mandate effectively and responsibly.

Claims of JIM partiality just do not stand up to scrutiny, when we consider that all parties have acknowledged that sarin gas was used in Khan Shaykhun, and, as reported by the OPCW, once again this week the Syrian regime itself provided the JIM with samples of evidence that support that conclusion. The JIM has even gone so far as to visit Syria several times to further its investigation, which we had hoped would satisfy the inappropriate demands of some members of the Council. But it appears that it will never be enough for some Council members. We are not deceived or deterred, however, and we call on all members of the Council to join us in rejecting such attacks on the JIM. Such attacks are not intended to get us closer to the truth, they are intended to hide the truth. They are not designed to get us closer to accountability for chemical-weapon use in Syria, they are designed to shield the perpetrators of some of the worst war crimes of our century.

Fortunately, the Council will have more chances to show that it values the truth and to show its solidarity with the Syrian people. The JIM's mandate expires on 16 November, in almost three weeks from now. That investigative body should be a great symbol of what the Council can do when we work together. It is a symbol of our commitment to justice and accountability, and it represents hope for thousands of suffering and grieving Syrian civilians. We therefore call on all Council members not to turn their backs on this hope, and to preserve the Council's unity in the face of Syrian chemical-weapon attacks. We call on the Security Council to take up this vital matter once again and vote to extend, at that time, the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): A little more than four years ago in this very Chamber, a member of the Security Council proudly declared,

> "the use of chemical weapons by any party will be carefully investigated by the Security Council,

> which will stand ready to take action under Chapter VII of the Charter" (*S/PV.7038, p.4*).

"By any party" were wise words indeed. Does anyone know who uttered those words four years ago? Are there any guesses? It was the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Sergey Lavrov. Today, those words have lost all meaning. They ring hollow in this Chamber today, drowned out by Russia's veto — its ninth on Syria in six years.

Today, we should have been extending the investigation that Minister Lavrov called for, allowing the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) another year to conduct its vital work. Instead, because of Russia alone, that investigation is destined to come to a premature and unnecessary conclusion next month. Unless Russia changes its mind, as I hope it does, the report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism on Khan Shaykhun will be its last, despite the continuing evidence from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons of other cases of chemical weapons use in Syria.

I have often expressed my disappointment at Russia's actions on Syria in this Chamber. I have often expressed my frustration at their refusal to allow the Security Council to respond to the most heinous crimes committed in Syria, but today all I will ask is, why? Why has Russia alone stopped an investigation whose work is not yet complete? Why has Russia brought an end to a Mechanism that it initiated and we all created and mandated when there are still questions to answer about sarin in Al-Latamneh. Russia called for the formation of the JIM; it negotiated its terms and it agreed its mission. Yet, when faced with the prospect of the JIM revealing the truth, why has Russia alone chosen to shoot the messenger?

It seems that, not content with spuriously questioning the JIM's methods and conclusions, Russia has now sought to silence them. Instead of respecting the professional and impartial work of the JIM, whose tireless efforts I pay tribute to today, Russia alone has chosen to abuse its veto to support a regime that has no regard for international treaties, no regard for the most basic rules of war, no regard for its own people.

We have worked hard together to build the international norms and conventions that have long prevented the use of chemical weapons. For decades it seemed as though the international community had reduced these weapons to a historical footnote from the First World War — no longer used, no longer a part of a modern humane society. But now, what kind of message does this veto send to those who might consider using such weapons? What kind of message does it send to groups like Da'esh, the very groups that Russia says it is committed to defeating?

We have heard a lot about breaking the unity of the Security Council. It is not the 11 members of the Security Council who voted in favour of draft resolution S/2017/884 who are breaking the unity. It is not the 11 members of the Security Council who did not support the Russian procedural shenanigans this morning who are breaking the Security Council's unity. It is Russia, which is protecting the Syrian regime, that has broken the Security Council's unity.

The United Kingdom cannot and will not let Russia's actions today erode the norms that we have worked so hard to create. Russia's action will not stop us from working with our partners to find justice for the victims of chemical weapons and we will not let up in our efforts to prevent the use of these weapons by anyone anywhere. The work of the JIM will not go to waste. We have its findings; we have its reports and, whatever Russia's actions today,

> "the use of chemical weapons by any party will be carefully investigated by the Security Council, which will stand ready to take action under Chapter VII of the Charter" (*S/PV.7038, p.4*),

to quote Minister Lavrov again. We owe it to the victims to ensure justice.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to express once again its firmest and categorical condemnation of the use of chemical substances as weapons. This is an unjustifiable and criminal act wherever and whenever it happens and whoever does it. The use of these weapons is a serious violation of international law and international peace and security. We believe that it is essential for the perpetrators of these terrible and criminal acts to be brought to justice and held accountable.

Bolivia once again reiterates, as it has been doing for several months, that it is not against the renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). On the contrary, we believe that we should allow the Mechanism to conduct its work in the most methodical, technical, professional, supported and depoliticized way possible. The renewal of its mandate should be considered after its report is issued.

Over the past few months, some technical concerns and observations have been raised in various ways by some Council members. We believe that these concerns should be considered and resolved. That is why we believe that, prior to the renewal of the Mechanism's mandate, we need to consider its report. We believe that, in this case, two days before the deadline of the publication of the report, time is not really a mitigating factor since, I reiterate, its publication is only two days away.

We feel that the Mechanism's work was undermined at least twice this year — first, when its reports were politicized through the addition of information to draft resolutions that were not contained in these reports, which, on a previous occasion, had been a reason for a veto of a draft resolution that had been submitted. Furthermore, another serious issue that weakens the Mechanism's mandate and the Security Council's commitment are the unilateral military actions which are in breach of international law.

This is a fundamental issue for the international community and for our work. If we clearly state that maintaining the Council's unity on this situation is essential, we do not understand why draft resolutions are designed that we know in advance will be vetoed for the reasons I mentioned earlier. Why must the Council consider draft resolutions that are intentionally designed to be vetoed? What is the political calculus behind these intentions? We regret that, instead of coordinating efforts to try to reach consensus positions on a topic that is clearly in everyone's interest, pressure is brought to bear on certain members and their image is maligned before the international community.

Lastly, my delegation wants to state very clearly that on this and other topics, it will reject all pressure brought to bear on it by any member of the Council or Member of the Organization. My delegation's actions and decisions will be taken based on the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We categorically reject any attempt to unduly influence or put pressure on the Bolivian delegation in its decision-making.

A vote against draft resolution S/2017/884 is not a vote against the JIM. A vote against this draft resolution is a vote against the politicization of the Security Council. A vote against this draft resolution is an appeal to make greater efforts so that we may demonstrate unity on a topic that is so important for the international community.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): Several cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria remain unresolved and the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) is clearly not over. The continued role of the JIM is essential to ensuring accountability. Japan supported draft resolution S/2017/884, submitted by the United States, because we believe that it makes sense to ensure the continuity of the work of the JIM through the extension of its current mandate.

I listened very carefully to statements made by the representatives of Russia and Bolivia. It is unfortunate that the Mechanism's mandate was not renewed today. At the same time, I understand that Russia and Bolivia do not oppose the renewal of the mandate as such. Japan has full confidence in the Mechanism's expertise, impartiality and professionalism. It is the responsibility of the international community and indeed of all humanity to ensure accountability for the use of chemical weapons. It is therefore important that the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): Ukraine sponsored and voted in favour of draft resolution S/2017/884, on renewing the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, in order to ensure that the Mechanism continues its crucially important work. Considering the scope of investigations, the gravity of the crimes and the large number of questions still pending, we believe that nothing should impede the activity of the Mechanism as an independent and unique tool for investigating the confirmed — and I stress the word "confirmed" — cases of the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

However, in spite of overwhelming support for the draft resolution, one Council member continues to block each and every decision that could move us closer to bringing the perpetrators of those terrible crimes to justice. It is not about the visit to the sites in Syria or other manipulations with this particular effect; we all know that there was no need to conduct such a visit. It is not about the final conclusions of the Mechanism, which will be presented later. It is not even about politicizing the whole process or creating purely artificial obstacles for an objective and thorough investigation.

Today's voting has demonstrated a much more dangerous tendency — one in which fundamental

international norms are cynically ignored and independent structures are held hostage. Today's voting has demonstrated once again the increasing abuse of the right to veto. Today, the Council has failed to do its job again. The Mechanism's mandate ends on 17 November. That means that there about three weeks left to find a solution as to how the Mechanism can be preserved. We think it is still doable, and it is necessary. We cannot fail and send to the world a completely wrong signal with far-reaching consequences for the existing non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction regimes.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that it is the ultimate responsibility of the Council to defend and restore respect for justice and international law, notwithstanding any attempts of reactive manipulation or altering the facts.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): As the global non-proliferation architecture continues to face extremely serious challenges, the Security Council has the responsibility to uphold the integrity and credibility of these crucial long-standing norms for our collective security, preserving pathways for accountability in the case of violations. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is a critical tool in that respect, and Italy fully supported the renewal of its mandate today and will continue to support it for the future, hoping that the Security Council will be able to find consensus on such a key issue. In our view, a timely renewal would have, contrary to what happened last year, ensured the continuity and the predictability of the activities of the Mechanism. It would have helped to retain the crucial know-how developed by the Mechanism's team during this year regarding the pressing objective that we continue to share as allegations of new incidents continue to emerge.

We are therefore disappointed that the renewal has been impossible today. The result of the voting not only risks affecting the future of the Mechanism but also augments divisions in the Security Council that, frankly, should not be there and that we hope can be overcome since upholding the chemical non-proliferation regime is in everybody's interest. So, while we look forward to the final report of the Mechanism on the events in Khan Shaykhun and Om Hush, confident that the report will confirm the Mechanism's impartiality, objectivity and independence. We hope that the Council will be able to find again its unity in the coming weeks on such crucial issues for our collective security. Fighting impunity, identifying perpetrators and holding them accountable must be a shared priority of the Council, one that unifies us instead of dividing us.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): It is regrettable that the Council could not adopt draft resolution S/2017/884, renewing the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, which was created based on consensus. The reason why we voted in favour of the draft resolution is because there are still credible allegations of the use of chemical weapons under investigation by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the work of the Mechanism is not yet over.

We believe that the Mechanism remains an important mechanism to establish those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria, both State and non-State actors. We are also convinced by the explanation of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, that renewing the Mechanism's mandate in a matter that ensures institutional continuity and stability, drawing lessons from the experience of last year, was crucial.

Despite today's outcome, we are hopeful that every possible effort will continue to be made to restore the Council's unity and achieve the necessary compromise to renew the Mechanism's mandate. The Mechanism's existence is indispensable as a deterrent to the use of chemical weapons, not only in Syria, but also in the wider region. Without a mechanism to clearly establish responsibility, the Council would be sending the wrong message to the perpetrators of this heinous crime.

Of course, we know the final report of the Mechanism will be coming out shortly, and the way we voted today should in no way be interpreted as an a priori endorsement of the report or even the slackening of our resolve to be as objective as possible, focusing on the technical work of the Mechanism, from which we expect the highest level of objectivity and fidelity to what the facts of the case dictate. Its final report is expected to establish clear responsibility on the Om Hush and Khan Shaykhun incidents.

Our position has always been consistent. Those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria should be punished based on robust and conclusive evidence. It is impossible to overlook the concerns of the Russian Federation and Bolivia. That is why the Mechanism has an enormous responsibility to be

objective and to avoid the appearance of politicizing the matter, which for some already appears to be politicized.

It is also a matter of self-respect for members of the Mechanism, as well as its Chair, to be as scrupulous as possible in that regard. I can assure the Russian Federation and Bolivia that our standard is very high, and we will not accept shoddy work. As we have stated repeatedly, we attach great importance to this matter of the use of chemical weapons not only because we are a member of the Council and a signatory to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, but also because of historical reasons which are not necessary to delve into at this point. Therefore, we will take an appropriate position, based on the content of the upcoming report, which, we believe, has to be robust and reliable, both in its methodologies and in its conclusions.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Kazakhstan takes a firm and consistent position on the issue before us. We have always opposed the use of any type of weapons of mass destruction in any circumstances by anyone. My country and my people are very engaged in and have always supported the fight against such atrocities.

We fully endorse the need to continue the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), which remains a restaining and arbitration mechanism with no alternative. In view of the continued incidents of the use of chemical weapons in Syria and the existence of undisclosed crimes, we are confident that the mandate of the JIM must be maintained and continued.

We respect the position of our colleagues who support the extension of JIM's mandate. We are aware that the Mechanism lost its momentum and expertise potential in the past year because of a delayed extension, two months after the initial completion of its mandate. We would not like to see a similar situation this year. At the same time, we consider it logical that once we are close to the date of the report, there is merit in seeing and evaluating the outcome of the work of the JIM. It is also necessary to extend the work of the Mechanism, taking into account any existing challenges and difficulties that it has encountered, if any.

It is regrettable that we are not able to bring together common approaches and visions on the issue, especially with regard to when and how to preserve and improve the work of the Mechanism. On the other hand, there is no doubt that members of the Council have similar views on the urgency of the work of the JIM. We therefore have to work with greater political will to find the desired compromise. We are not supportive of today's action, especially at a time when the Council does not have unity or agreement on the issue. The contrary positions, which are known to all parties, have led us to predictable results. In the current situation, we could not take the position of either side, since doing so would not solve the problem in the end. Only unity and mutual compromise can lead us to a mutually acceptable solution of the issue, which we did not see in the current situation.

In that regard, my country abstained in the voting and encourages the Council to speak with one voice against current challenges. We remain convinced that the mandate of the JIM will be renewed before its expiration date, especially when we hear a consensus on the necessity to do so.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): It is highly regrettable that the Council was unable to unite behind a technical extension of the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigate Mechanism (JIM), and that the draft resolution (S/2017/884) before us was not adopted.

Sweden condemns in the strongest terms the repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria. We offer our full support for the JIM and its objective, impartial and independent investigations. There must be no impunity for those responsible for chemical weapons attacks. The JIM, which was unanimously set up by the Council, plays a critical role in protecting the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. Its important work must continue.

The JIM's mandate expires in less than a month and a timely renewal remains essential. Today's vote is a temporary setback, but it does not signal the end of the JIM and its mandate.

(*spoke in French*)

Now is not the time to sit back.

(*spoke in English*)

There are some 60 cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria that are currently being examined by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which could later be referred to the JIM. One can also not exclude the possibility of new attacks. If the JIM did not already exist, we would simply have

to invent it. Now is the time for the Council to roll up its sleeves, come back together and speak with one voice in support of the JIM and accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. That will demand good-faith negotiations on the part of everyone, but it is not impossible.

We will continue to do our utmost over the coming weeks to seek to ensure the continuation of the JIM and the protection of its autonomous mandate. We will support all serious and genuine initiatives that aim to achieve that objective, and we stand ready to help in facilitating efforts to find a way forward in the Council. The Syrian people, who have been suffering for more than six years of conflict, deserve no less from us.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): We are disappointed that the Security Council was not able to maintain its unity to adopt a technical renewal of the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for another year.

Senegal voted in favour of draft resolution S/2017/884, as we are convinced of the central role that the Mechanism plays in the framework of the global non-proliferation architecture and of its efforts to independently, impartially and objectively implement its mandate under resolution 2235 (2015), which was renewed through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2319 (2016).

It is important to recall that the mandate consists of identifying, to the greatest extent possible, the individuals, entities, groups or Governments that have perpetrated, organized or ordered the use of chemicals — including chlorine gas and all other toxic chemical products — as weapons in Syria, as well as those who have participated in such actions in any way. The continued allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria further demonstrate the need for the JIM to pursue its work, particularly in a context in which non-State actors, including terrorist groups, could obtain such weapons of mass destruction.

The delegation of Senegal is hopeful that following the publication within 48 hours of the report of the Mechanism, the Council will be able to return to the essential issue of accountability for the unacceptable use of chemical weapons. We therefore reiterate our appeal for a return to the spirit of consensus that prevailed during the adoption of resolutions 2118 (2013), 2235 (2015) and resolution 2319 (2016), which led to tangible progress in addressing the issue of the problematic use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is said that humans are the only animals that trip over the same stone twice. In 2016, we had a situation in which the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) was about to expire. There were doubts about its continuation. There was a brief rollover of its mandate and finally, in November, it was adopted. What happened in the meantime?

What happened is that the JIM is not just an idea. It is based on the work of human beings — men and women who earn salaries, who have families and who need to know what is going to happen to their lives. That is what happened last year. In the face of uncertainty, most of the staff of the JIM sought contracts elsewhere. They withdrew and looked for other means of earning a living.

A small country like Uruguay makes great efforts not to stumble over the same obstacle twice. That is precisely where we are today. We are less than a month away from the expiration of the mandate of the JIM. The men and women who work for the JIM have the right to know what is going to happen to their lives, what is going to happen to them, and whether they will have to change jobs. We therefore believe that we should be pragmatic and renew the JIM mandate. Let us not make the same mistake twice. Let us renew the mandate as soon as possible and retain the Mechanism's staff. Essentially, last year we had to wait six months for the JIM to be stood up anew. There was almost no JIM activity from November of last year until May of this year. Is that what we are after? I think what is most logical is to renew the mandate.

For us, renewing the mandate matters because Uruguay alone does not have the means of investigating what happened in Syria or what is happening in the 60 reported cases of potential chemical-weapon use. We need an impartial body to do the work. The United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the Security Council established the JIM. Let us once again give it an opportunity to continue its work.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China is deeply concerned about the use of chemical weapons in Syria and feels the suffering that is inflicted upon the Syrian people by such attacks. China is always opposed to the use of chemical weapons, under any

circumstances, by any State, organization or individual and regardless of the motivation.

We support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) on the chemical weapons of Syria in carrying out its comprehensive objectives and impartial investigation of the incidents in question, according to the mandate of the Security Council, so as to arrive at a result that is based on conclusive evidence and stands the test of time and facts.

All Council members have condemned the use of chemical weapons in Syria, so there is consensus on demanding that the incidents in question be investigated. The unity and single voice of the Security Council on the question of Syrian chemical weapons are conducive to finding out the facts, bringing to justice the perpetrators and responsible parties and deterring the further use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The draft resolution (S/2017/884) that was just voted on by the Security Council included some positive elements on which there exists consensus, such as support for the continued work of the JIM. On the other hand, some Council members expressed the hope of comprehensively reviewing the mandate and extension of the JIM in connection with the upcoming report of the Mechanism, so as to help to improve its work more effectively.

The Security Council could have continued consultations on the contents of the draft resolution and the timing of its adoption in an effort to agree on a document that enjoys the unanimous support of all Council members. China has tirelessly urged the Council to continue consultations in a bid for consensus. However, regrettably, the Council rushed to vote on the draft resolution in the absence of consensus. That is not conducive to the unity of the Security Council, nor is it helpful in solving the Syrian chemical weapons issue.

Against that backdrop, China abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. Political settlement is the only way to lift the Syrian people out of their suffering. Recently, positive progress has been achieved in the Geneva peace talks and the Astana dialogue. With regard to the political settlement of the question of Syria, we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

At this critical juncture, China calls upon all members of the Council to bear in mind the broader objective of continuing the political process in Syria, maintain unity on the question of Syrian chemical weapons and create favourable conditions for the Syrian parties to arrive at a settlement that is acceptable to all as soon as possible through the Geneva peace talks, thereby playing a constructive role for an early, comprehensive, just and appropriate settlement of the question of Syria.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt voted in favour of the draft resolution (S/2017/884) that was submitted today, because of our keen interest in ensuring that those involved in the use of chemical weapons in Syria are identified. That requires the continued mandate of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), as it has been tasked by the Security Council to perform its work to the best of its abilities.

Egypt's interest is based on the need to enhance the concept of accountability and uncover the facts of the Syrian crisis, which would also allow us to confront an urgent threat that the world has yet to deal with effectively. The use of chemical weapons in Syria and the growing proliferation and possession that we have seen is a threat to the security of the countries of the region and the world.

While the international community has created a system that deals with the possession of that type of weapon by Governments, it has not yet established a system that is able to deter non-State groups from seeking to possess chemical weapons or acquiring the technologies for their production. That is exacerbated by the interconnectedness and coordination that exists between non-State groups, which are scattered throughout the Middle East, and their increased ability to transport and manufacture such weapons.

Egypt voted in favour of the draft resolution regardless of the final outcome of the voting process. However, we voted in its favour because we wanted to express our commitment to naming the perpetrators of chemical-weapon use in Syria and stress the need to improve the working methodologies of the JIM.

In the past, the Security Council has discussed the methodology of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and the working methods of the OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, of which the findings directly impact the Joint Investigative Mechanism. It has become clear to Egypt and many members of the

Security Council that there is an urgent need to work to improve the methodologies of both mechanisms, especially with regard to visiting the sites in Syria where they must investigate the use of chemical weapons. Needless to say, conducting those visits, inspecting the sites under investigation, recording and collecting the evidence and available samples in a timely manner and examining all possible scenarios would no doubt contribute to creating a strong foundation for any findings to be issued by the fact-finding mission or the JIM.

Despite the draft resolution not being adopted today, we believe that there is still an opportunity for the Security Council to renew the JIM mandate. There is also a chance for the Security Council to improve the working methodologies of the JIM, because just as the Council created the Mechanism, it is also responsible for guiding and supporting it, without influencing its work or the outcomes of its reports, which must remain neutral, independent and out of the clutches of political manipulation.

I renew our call to Security Council members to work on preserving the Mechanism and supporting and developing its working methodology. We stress the need to maintain the unity of the Council in that regard, which is in line with our interests and the interests of all our peoples.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation voted against the draft resolution (S/2017/884) that was submitted by the United States on the technical extension of the mandate of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). It is regrettable that the authors have chosen a path of confrontation and division in the Security Council. That is exactly the kind of politicization that we have been talking about today and, incidentally, that same cynicism that the representatives of the United States have talked about. We want to emphasize that we too are very concerned about the use of chemical weapons in Syria. In response to the representative of the United Kingdom, I can affirm everything that Foreign Minister Lavrov has said, whom he quoted today, for which I thank him. Every incident should be investigated and the perpetrators found and punished. Speaking for ourselves, that is what we are working to achieve. But what do those words have to do with today's meeting?

I want to emphasize that today's vote is also meaningless because it will not affect the fate of the JIM in any way. It will go on functioning as it did before. We will return to the discussion of the question of its extension.

(*spoke in English*)

We have not stopped it, as the representative of Great Britain said. We have not brought it to an end.

(*spoke in Russian*)

Since it is possible that some here were not listening very attentively to my statement, I will quote myself again:

> "Today's decision will in no way affect the future of the Joint Investigative Mechanism. The way it functions up to 17 November is the way it will continue to function".

In response to my friend and colleague from Uruguay, who is concerned about the fate of the unfortunate JIM staff, we will of course be sorry for them, if need be, although nothing has happened to them yet. But the JIM is not a charity for the support of its employees' families. It is dealing with something rather more important, and the tasks ahead of it are considerably more important than that, although it is of course important too. We will have time to worry about the fate of the families of employees. There is no need to insist on it right now.

I found it amusing today that not one but several delegations read out prepared statements condemning some countries' use of the veto. Did they know in advance that we would exercise the right of veto today? That only confirms that today we have been witnessing a staged performance with a single goal, that of pillorying one particular country. Incidentally, I have a request for those who talk to the journalists at the stake-out after today's meeting, which is to ask them to please not distort our position. I have already been obliged to repeat myself, and I will say once again that we have not shut down the JIM, we simply have not made a decision about its extension today, and we will return to the issue.

Just one more thing. It is regrettable that today's meeting was held at all. But it is clear that whoever requested it knew what the scenario would be ahead of time, and that their aims were certainly not what they declared them to be in their statements. We will return

to the question of extending the mandate of the JIM after the release of its report and a calm discussion in the Security Council of its content and conclusions. We will see what kind of mandate it should have in order to ensure that it performs its work objectively and professionally and so that we do not have meetings like today's in the future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of France.

France deeply regrets the result of this vote. The ongoing reports of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) show that chemical-weapon attacks in Syria have never ceased. That justifies, more than ever, the continuation of investigations to identify and punish those responsible, in the light of, among other things, the latest conclusions of the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic on a sarin attack in Al-Latamneh, in north-western Syria, on 30 March.

Today's vote was therefore yet another squandered opportunity. By failing to renew the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM), we are depriving ourselves of the possibility of documenting the cases of use of these weapons not only by the Syrian army, but also by non-State actors. It is a new kind of threat for which we must prepare ourselves.

We regret that the mandate renewal could not be adopted today, as it should of course have been, with pragmatism and responsibility, free from all politicization, to ensure the continuity of the work of the JIM. The Mechanism has proved itself. It is therefore our shared responsibility to build the consensus necessary to end the use of chemical weapons in Syria and prevent their re-emergence elsewhere. I would like to recall that 192 States, including Syria, have committed to renouncing the use of chemical weapons. Beyond the specific responsibility of the States parties, including Russia, we must all protect and strengthen the chemical non-proliferation regime.

As the final conclusions of the Mechanism approach, France will never give up. My country will not resign itself to tolerating the deconstruction of the non-proliferation regime. On the contrary, our priority must remain the full and complete dismantling of the Syrian chemical-weapon programme and the fight against impunity. In that spirit, France fully supports and reiterates its full confidence in the existing mechanisms of the United Nations and the OPCW.

France considers compliance with non-proliferation commitments to be among the most fundamental standards of international relations. Their violation is a danger to us all. We must therefore send a message of strength, including by identifying the perpetrators of these crimes. Any hope of lasting peace and stability in Syria requires the truth. That is a priority for France. This hope also calls for a political solution leading to a negotiated democratic transition, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex). That is the aim of France's efforts to establish a contact group to actively support the mediation of Mr. Staffan de Mistura.

As we celebrate United Nations Day today, I believe that it is important to put everything that is at stake into perspective. The international non-proliferation regimes are among the most important shared achievements of recent decades. Let us make no mistake — these regimes are the backbone of international peace and security. Yet they are being put to the test today, from the nuclear programme of North Korea to the use of chemical weapons in Syria, not to mention many other threats all over the world. On behalf of France, I would therefore like to appeal today for our extraordinary vigilance and for action. Let us not allow political differences — or, worse, short-term tactical calculations — to undermine those regimes. The continued existence and solidity of the international non-proliferation regimes are of vital importance to our common security. That is why it is the responsibility of the international community, and of the Security Council in particular, to maintain and strengthen them. And that is why today's negative vote is not and cannot be the last word.

France therefore solemnly calls on all States members of the Security Council to come together around the essential issues that I have outlined and to build the necessary consensus before the mandate of the JIM lapses in mid-November in order to renew it. We should all be aware that this is our historic responsibility.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.